

*File Copy***ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET**

SUBJECT: (Optional)

Monthly Report -- Nicosia Bureau

FROM:

Chief, Operations Group

EXTENSION

NO

DATE

May 1988

STAT

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

OFFICER'S INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

RECEIVED

FORWARDED

1.

C/MOD

2.

3.

C/ESG

4.

5.

C/FED

6.

7.

C/ADD

8.

9.

C/HED

10.

11.

C/Computer Operations

12.

13.

14.

15.

Retain/Destroy

FBIS-4809-88

8 June 88

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, Foreign Broadcast Information Service

THROUGH : Chief, Operations Group

SUBJECT : Monthly Report -- Nicosia Bureau -- May 1988

I. GENERAL

The new U.S. ambassador to Cyprus, Mr. William Perrin, visited the bureau 26 May for a briefing and walk through of our new building. He was very impressed with our new bureau, demonstrating his impeccable taste when he complemented us on the color scheme throughout the building. He asked the bureau chief to return to Cyprus in two years to assist in the interior decoration of the new embassy slated for completion in 1990. The bureau chief reluctantly declined, citing other commitments.

Progress continued during the month toward concluding the final settlement of our NOB contract. The architect and Quality Surveyor have been negotiating with the contractor to reach agreement on the final settlement.

II. OPERATIONS

A. Monitorial/Editorial

1. An unsuccessful terrorist attack nonetheless brought bloodshed to Cyprus in May. A car bomb, apparently targeted against the Israeli Embassy, blew up in the middle of traffic on Grivas Digheni Avenue in the heart of Nicosia, killing the Lebanese driver and two Cypriot passers-by and injuring at least 16 others. The Lebanese owner of the car, who may have set off the bomb by remote control, was arrested. The car had been turned away twice by guards at the Israeli Embassy and was fleeing from pursuing police when it blew up in the middle of a bridge across the Pedhieos River near the embassy. The clandestine Radio Free Lebanon reported that the Abu Nidal organization claimed responsibility for the blast. The PLO issued a statement condemning the incident and declaring that it was part of a plot to damage relations between the PLO and the Cypriot Government. One result of the incident was a decision by the government to tighten entry requirements for foreigners coming to Cyprus and to deport many of those considered "possible security risks." The bureau duty editors alerted the U.S. Embassy regional security officer by phone to the first radio reports that provided details on the blast and kept him advised as events developed.

2. Relations between the Turkish Cypriot authorities and the UN Forces in Cyprus turned sour following other violent incidents during the month, in which the UN Forces suffered their first casualties since their deployment in Cyprus in 1974. Two Austrian soldiers were wounded and a Turkish Cypriot civilian was killed in two related clashes near the mixed village of Pyla, east of Larnaca. Turkish Cypriot authorities later accused the UN of murdering the villager and demanded the removal of the commander, Austrian General Greindl. Meanwhile, the UN command reported that one of the wounded UN soldiers had shot the Turkish Cypriot in self defense, while the other soldier had been wounded in a later attack by relatives of the dead man. In the other incident, near the end of the month, a Turkish soldier was killed by Greek Cypriot forces near Athienou

village in the buffer zone, between Nicosia and Larnaca. The Turkish Cypriot authorities said the soldier had been reported missing 24 hours before the incident and blamed the UN for allowing him to be killed. In both incidents, the bureau editors alerted the embassy political officer and kept him advised of new reports as details emerged. The political officer compiled a report on the second incident, including FBIS reportage, that was cabled to Assistant Secretary of State Rozanne Ridgway, who was in Moscow at the time for the summit talks.

3. The hostage situation in Lebanon took three steps forward and one step back this month. The three remaining French hostages were released on 4 May. Unfortunately, a Belgian doctor working for a Norwegian humanitarian organization was declared missing as of 21 May. The bureau placed Lebanese radios on open speaker watch on 4 May when an advance by the Israeli Defense Forces in southern Lebanon brought them to within 5 km of Syrian positions in the South. Open watch was discontinued when the Israelis announced their withdrawal late on 4 May.

4. In response to reports of renewed demonstrations in Soviet Armenia on 13 May and Soviet troops patrolling the capital of the disputed province of Nagorno-Karabakh, the bureau again began close monitoring of regional Soviet radios. The effort yielded a few FYIs on radio behavior and a few filed items in Armenian, Russian, and Azeri by the end of the month.

5. The bureau, in coordination with Headquarters and London's PMU, decided to continue covering newly available Iranian papers delivered from Tehran by an air courier, following the evaluation of a period of trial coverage. Some of the papers are not otherwise available, and others are often available faster by this means than from other sources at Headquarters and London. Most of the papers were covered at PMU during the trial, and all coverage will now be shifted to Nicosia bureau. The volume of production is expected to be low, but the bureau is installing a fax unit so that selected articles can be passed quickly to Headquarters for processing any time the combined load of Persian (Farsi) voice, TV, and press coverage is more than the bureau's two Persian monitors can handle. The bureau has also asked London to advertise for an additional Farsi/Arabic monitor and to test candidates for Nicosia.

6. During the illness of Tel Aviv bureau's Persian/Dari monitor, Nicosia assumed coverage of the clandestine Flag of Freedom radio in Persian from 3 to 31 May.

7. Cairo television coverage, handled by the bureau's chief technician at his home in Limassol, resumed with the advent of warmer weather, which helps reception, and the end of the Ramadan holiday disruptions of Cairo's broadcast schedules. Coverage is expected to continue until late October.

B. Lateral Services

USIS Cairo requested processing of an interview with Egyptian Field Marshal Abu Ghazalah from the 13 May issue of AL-MUSAWWAR. When the consumer office received the bureau's account of the interview from MENA, they expressed thanks that the bureau had recognized the importance of the piece and had provided the account before its nominal publication date. We passed word of the consumer's interest on to Amman Bureau, who provided twenty-some takes of the text of the speech priority as soon as the paper was available.

C. Communications

1. Due to a changeover in satellite uplink equipment, the bureau underwent a scheduled commo outage from 1200 gmt on 4 May until 1600 gmt on 8 May. During the outage the bureau activated the commercial backup circuit to London Bureau.

2. A comparison of the wordage count under the new system (introduced along with the new FBIS message format at the end of April) shows that the new system reduced reported wordage 31 percent compared to the old system, for the one day compared. On that basis, it appears that this month's total filed publishable wordage would have been over 470,000 under the old system, instead of 325,840 as reported this month under the new system. That is a jump far above any other month in the past year, but still far from a bureau record.

D. Technical

1. During the month installation of antenna selector switches for all monitoring stations was completed. Monitors can now select one of eight antenna positions for optimal reception.

2. The Bureau received an IDD modem and tested it satisfactorily to establish computer-to-computer communications with Field Engineering Division at Headquarters.

3. A third computer has been connected in the teletype room to provide a back-up machine should either of the two Victor computers fail.

III. ADMINISTRATION

A. Personnel

Bureau Chief [] returned from emergency leave on 9 May. STAT

IV. VISITS

1. Headquarters Armenian linguist [] was on TDY at the bureau from 17 to 31 May for familiarization with voice monitoring techniques. STAT

2. [] an AG analyst, visited the bureau on 20 May during a swing through the region. STAT

[]

Bureau Chief
Nicosia Bureau

ATTACHMENT: Production Report